

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A management system for a fee-based service wherein a particular equipment of a business unit provided at a predetermined service providing place is used with payment of a charge by a user who comes to the service providing place at which the equipment is provided, comprising:

a user side communication terminal;

a business unit side communication terminal connectable to said user side communication terminal over a communication line; and

control and management means for communicating with said user side communication terminal through said business unit side communication terminal, controlling the particular equipment and managing a service by which the particular equipment is utilized;

said control and management means being operable to start the service in which the particular equipment is utilized when the user inputs at least address information of said user side communication terminal and pays a predetermined charge for the service and issue, when an event of the service comes to an end, a notification of the end of the event to said user side communication terminal, through which the address information has been inputted, through said business unit side communication terminal.

2. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means permits,

if the user receiving the notification of the end of the event of the service comes to the service providing place and inputs unique user identification information determined in advance, the user to acquire a result of the service from the particular equipment.

3. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 2, wherein the user identification information includes address information regarding said user side communication terminal.

4. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 3, wherein said user side communication terminal is a mobile communication terminal.

5. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 3, wherein said user side communication terminal is a portable digital assistant having a communication function.

6. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein the user identification information includes address information regarding said user side communication terminal and a unique number determined by the user individually.

7. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means imposes, if the user does not acquire the result of the service from the particular equipment after the notification of the end of the event is issued, an excess charge corresponding to a period of time from a point of time when a predetermined time elapses after the issuance of the notification of the end of the event

to another point of time at which the user inputs the user identification information, and permits the user to acquire the result of the service from the particular equipment after the user pays the excess charge.

5 8. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 7, wherein said control and management means increases the excess charge stepwise in accordance with the excess time.

10 9. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 7, wherein said control and management means issues a notification of a request for reception of the result of the service to the user and alarm information representing imposition of the excess charge to said user side communication terminal at predetermined intervals of time from the point of time at which the predetermined time elapses after the issuance
15 of the notification of the end of the event.

20 10. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 7, wherein said control and management means places, when a predetermined time determined in advance elapses while the user does not acquire the result of the service after the end of the event, the result of the service into custody to return the particular equipment into a state wherein another user can utilize the particular equipment.

25 11. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein payment of the charge to said control and management means is performed by an accounting system through said communication line.

12. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein payment of the charge to said control and management means is performed through use of a cash card, a credit card, an electronic payment system or a prepaid card or by throwing in of money.

13. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 11, wherein said user side communication terminal sends a notification at least of an identification number unique to the user and an account number of a financial organ from which a predetermined amount of money is to be paid to said business unit side communication terminal.

14. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 12, wherein said user side communication terminal sends a notification at least of an identification number unique to the user and an account number of a financial organ from which a predetermined amount of money is to be paid to said business unit side communication terminal.

15. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means normally grasps a utilization situation of the service and stores information regarding the utilization situation into storage means.

16. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means manages a plurality of equipments by the same business unit provided in different districts.

17. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 16, wherein said control and management means issues, if an inquiry is received from said user side communication terminal through said communication line, a notification of information regarding an equipment which can be utilized to said user side communication terminal through said business unit side communication terminal.

18. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 17, wherein said control and management means assures, if an equipment which can be utilized on a date designated by the user is present, the equipment as a reserved equipment for the user.

19. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 18, wherein said control and management means issues, when the reservation is completed, a notification of a result of the reservation to said user side communication terminal through said business unit side communication terminal.

20. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 18, wherein said control and management means displays, if the utilization reservation is established, information that the equipment is reserved.

21. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 18, wherein said control and management means sets a reservation charge separately for the request for reservation.

22. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 17, wherein said control and management means imposes

a reservation cancellation fine if the user does not utilize the reserved service even after a time determined in advance elapses from a predetermined hour of the date of the reservation by the user.

5 23. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means includes a failure situation discrimination section for supervising a utilization situation of services to discriminate presence or absence of a service which is in failure, and issues a
10 notification for request for maintenance of the service to a communication terminal of a predetermined maintenance business unit for the predetermined service which has been discriminated to be in failure.

 24. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed
15 in claim 1, wherein said business unit communication terminal has a server function and forms an application service provider.

 25. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein said control and management means includes user information inputting means, user information storage
20 means, service function driving control means, timer means, user identification information confirmation means, payment confirmation means for confirming reception of payment of a predetermined charge, service operation means operable by the user, information origination means for originating
25 predetermined information to said user side communication terminal, application storage means in which a program for

causing a function of a service to be executed is stored, and control means for controlling some or all of the components of said control and management means.

26. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed
5 in claim 25, wherein said control and management means further includes situation discrimination means for discriminating a situation of the service at present, and storage means for storing a result of the discrimination by said situation discrimination means.

10 27. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 25, wherein said control and management means further includes imposed charge amount calculation means for calculating an excess charge other than a basic charge regarding utilization of the service.

15 28. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 25, wherein at least said information origination means is provided in a server possessed by a business unit.

20 29. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 26, wherein said situation discrimination means for discriminating a situation of the service at present and said storage means for storing a result of the discrimination by said situation discrimination means are provided in a server possessed by a business unit.

25 30. A management system for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 1, wherein the particular equipment of the business unit is a washing machine of a coin laundry, and the fee-based

service is that the user uses the washing machine with payment of a charge to wash the washing.

31. A management method for a fee-based service for controlling, by a control and management system, a particular equipment of a business unit provided at a predetermined service providing place so that a user can use the particular equipment with payment of a charge and managing the service by said control and management system, comprising the steps of:

starting, when the user inputs at least address information of a user side communication terminal and pays a predetermined charge for the service to said control and management system, operation of the service in which the particular equipment is utilized and locking the particular equipment to inhibit use of the particular equipment by another person;

issuing, when an event of the service comes to an end, a notification of the end of the event to said user side communication terminal, through which the address information has been inputted, through a business unit side communication terminal; and

permitting, if the user inputs unique user identification information to said control and management system, the user to acquire a result of the service from the particular equipment.

32. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of imposing, if the user does not acquire the result of the service from the

particular equipment after the notification of the end of the event is issued, an excess charge corresponding to a period of time from a point of time when a predetermined time elapses after the issuance of the notification of the end of the event
5 to another point of time at which the user inputs the user identification information.

33. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 32, wherein a notification of a request for reception of the result of the service to the user and alarm information
10 representing imposition of the excess charge are issued to said user side communication terminal at predetermined intervals of time from the point of time at which the predetermined time elapses after the issuance of the notification of the end of the event.

34. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of placing, when a predetermined time determined in advance elapses while the user
15 does not acquire the result of the service after the end of the event, the result of the service into custody to return the particular equipment into a state wherein another user can
20 utilize the particular equipment.

35. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 31, wherein a plurality of equipments by the same business unit provided in different districts are managed by
25 the same control and management system.

36. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed

in claim 35, further comprising the step of issuing, if an inquiry is received from said user side communication terminal through a communication line, a notification of information regarding a place of an equipment which can be utilized to said user side communication terminal through said communication line.

37. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 36, further comprising the step of assuring, if a place of a service which can be utilized on a date designated by the user is present, the equipment at the place of the service as a reserved equipment for the user.

38. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 37, further comprising the step of issuing, if the utilization reservation is established, a notification of a result of the reservation to said user side communication terminal through said communication line and displaying information that the equipment is reserved.

39. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of calculating a reservation charge separately.

40. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 39, further comprising the step of imposing a reservation cancellation fine if the user does not utilize the reserved service even after a time determined in advance elapses from a predetermined hour of the date of the reservation by the user.

41. A management method for a fee-based service as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the steps of supervising a

utilization situation of services by said control and management system to discriminate presence or absence of a service which is in failure, and issuing a notification for request for maintenance of the service to a communication terminal of a predetermined maintenance business unit for the predetermined service which has been discriminated to be in failure.

42. A recording medium on which a program for controlling, by a control and management system, a particular equipment of a business unit provided at a predetermined service providing place so that a user can use the particular equipment with payment of a charge and managing the service by said control and management system, the program comprising the steps of:

starting, when the user inputs at least address information of a user side communication terminal and pays a predetermined charge for the service to said control and management system, operation of the service in which the particular equipment is utilized and locking the particular equipment to inhibit use of the particular equipment by another person;

issuing, when an event of the service comes to an end, a notification of the end of the event to said user side communication terminal, through which the address information has been inputted, through a business unit side communication terminal; and

permitting, if the user inputs unique user identification information to said control and management system, the user

to acquire a result of the service from the particular equipment.